ACPL ITEM
DISCARDED

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE & ALLEN CO., IND.

j812 B73
Branch 172570

STORAGE
j812
Branch B73
172570
Christmas miracle
HOLIDAY COLLECTION

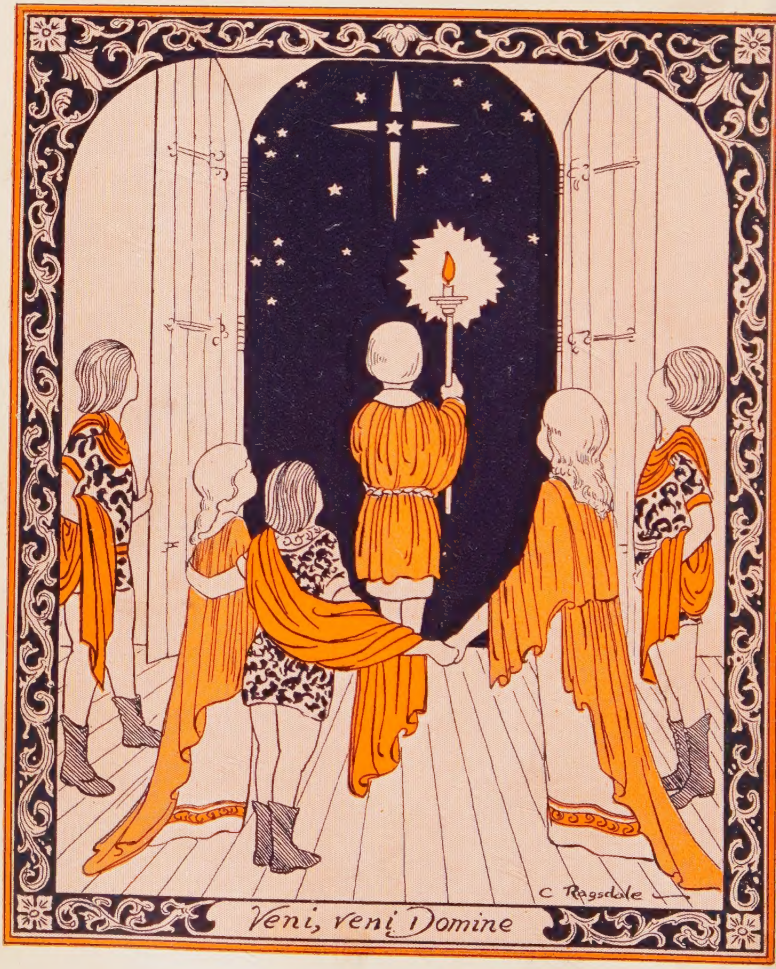
PUBLIC LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE & ALLEN CO., IND.
HOLIDAY COLLECTION

STCPAPE
510
HOLIDAY COLLEC
ACPL ITEM
DISCARDED
HOLIDAY COLLECTION

A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE
and
GOD BLESS THIS HOUSE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/christmasmiracle0000anna


C Ragsdale
Veni, veni Domine

A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE
And
GOD BLESS THIS HOUSE

Two Ceremonies for Christmas Eve
by Anna Hempstead Branch
Frontispiece by Clarissa Ragsdale

(Poets' Guild Series)

ADELPHI COMPANY
New York
1925

COPYRIGHT, 1925, BY
ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

To

C. I. MacCOLL
Head Worker of
Christodora House

[illegible]

"Blessed be thy leather,"
said the Christ Child.

THESE CEREMONIES ARE TAKEN FROM THE FEAST DAY SERIES PRESENTED IN *Magic Casements*, THE LITTLE POETS' PLAYHOUSE AT CHRISTODORA HOUSE. IF YOU CAN TELL ME WHO FIRST SPOKE THOSE WORDS, *Magic Casements*, I SHALL BE SURPRISED AT YOU.

"Magic casements opening on the foam
Of perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn."

God Bless This House WAS WRITTEN FOR THE OLD HEMPSTEAD HOUSE IN NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT.

IT WAS GIVEN ITS FIRST PUBLIC PRESENTATION AT CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT, AT THE CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE.

TO HIS SAVIOUR, A CHILD; A PRESENT BY A CHILD

O pretty child and bear this flower
Unto thy little Saviour
And tell Him by that bud now blown
He is the Rose of Sharon known.
When thou hast said it, stick it there
Upon his bib or stomacher.
And tell Him (for good handsell too)
That thou hast brought a whistle new,
Made of a clean straight oaten reed
To charm his cries (at time of need).
Tell him for coral, thou hast none,
But if thou hadst, He should have one;
But poor thou art and known to be
Even as moneyless as He:
Lastly, if thou canst win a kiss
From those mellifluous lips of His,
Then never take a second on
To spoil the first impression.

ROBERT HERRICK.

A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

A little play for Christmas Eve

The characters are a SHOEMAKER *and a company of* LITTLE BOYS *and* GIRLS. *The scene is in the shoemaker's shop. In the rear is a window and a door. There is an empty bench where he is going to place the shoes as he makes them. He is working very hard. A* CHILD *enters, barefooted and journey worn.*

A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

NCE upon a time there was a shoemaker who spent the livelong day from morning till night working at his bench. On Christmas Eve a Child came to him and begged him for a pair of shoes. Outside, the children were singing on their way to the Christmas tree.

CHILDREN:

(*Singing outside.*)

The Little Lord Jesus came to town
The wind blew up and the wind blew down;
Out in the street the wind was bold.
Now who would house Him out of the cold?

(*A Child opens the door and enters the room.*)

CHILD:

Please, shoemaker, I need a pair of shoes. Will you make some for me?

SHOEMAKER:

No indeed, my lad! Before morning I must make some stout boots for the Burgomaster, for to-morrow he gives a Christmas Feast.

CHILD:

My feet are bleeding, Shoemaker. *Little ones will do!* (*He holds out his foot.*)

SHOEMAKER:

Go away, I tell you. Before morning I must make some stout boots for the Burgomaster and some fur-lined shoes for the Burgomaster's wife.

CHILD:

(*Draws nearer.*)

My feet are bleeding, Shoemaker. *Little ones will do!*

SHOEMAKER:

Go away, I tell you. Before morning I must

make some stout boots for the Burgomaster, fur-lined shoes for the Burgomaster's wife and a pair of red shoes for the Burgomaster's daughter.

CHILD:

My feet are bleeding, Shoemaker. *Little ones will do.*

SHOEMAKER:

Go away, I tell you. Before morning I must make some stout boots for the Burgomaster, fur-lined shoes for the Burgomaster's wife, red shoes for the Burgomaster's daughter, and some satin slippers for his son's sweetheart.

CHILD:

My feet are bleeding, Shoemaker. *Little ones will do.*

SHOEMAKER:

Go away, I tell you. Before morning I must

make some stout boots for the Burgomaster, fur-lined shoes for the Burgomaster's wife, red shoes for the Burgomaster's daughter, satin slippers for his son's sweetheart, and some high boots for his son to go a-wooing.

CHILD:

My feet are bleeding, Shoemaker. *Little ones will do.*

SHOEMAKER:

Go away, I tell you. Before morning I must make some stout boots for the Burgomaster, fur-lined shoes for the Burgomaster's wife, red shoes for the Burgomaster's daughter, satin slippers for his son's sweetheart, high boots for his son to go a-wooing, and some silvery sandals for a lovely lady.

CHILD:

My feet are bleeding, Shoemaker. *Little ones will do.*

SHOEMAKER:

Well! Well! Well! Well! Well! I will see what I can do even if I lose my jobs by it.

(*So the Shoemaker took a fresh piece of leather and he cut it and he shaped it and he worked very hard at it, rat-tat-tat. He was making a pair of good shoes for the child.*)

SHOEMAKER:

(*Sings as he works.*)

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
Though I be poor,
Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
Guard my door.

(*The child steals to the door, opens it, peers out and returns with a pair of stout boots.*)

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
All the day long.
The Burgomaster wants his shoes
Made good and strong.

(*The child places the Burgomaster's boots on the bench, unseen by the Shoemaker. He claps his hands softly.*)

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
Then begin again.
They say the Twelve Disciples
Were hard-working men.

(*The child steals to the door, opens it, peers out, and returns with a pair of fur-lined shoes.*)

I love my leather
Better than my life.
I ought to make fur-lined shoes
For the Burgomaster's wife.

(*The child places the fur-lined shoes on the bench, unseen by the Shoemaker.*)

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
When He called, they came.
I thought I heard a voice
Calling me by name.

(*The child goes to the door, opens it, peers out and returns with a pair of red shoes.*)

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
What shall I do?
The Burgomaster's daughter
Wants a pretty red shoe.

(*The child places the red shoes on the bench, unseen by the Shoemaker.*)

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
I ought to make money!
Silver and gold—
The disciples hadn't any.

(*The child goes to the door, opens it, peers out and returns with a pair of satin slippers. I have no doubt they were embroidered with little rose-buds and forget-me-nots.*)

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
What shall I say?

A pair of satin slippers
Is a young girl's way.

(*The child places the satin slippers on the bench, unseen by the Shoemaker.*)

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
What they had, they gave.
None of them kept anything
Except the pilgrim's stave.

(*The child goes to the door, peers out and returns with a pair of fine boots.*)

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
What shall I do?
A young man needs fine boots
When he goes to woo.

(*The child places the fine boots on the bench, unseen by the Shoemaker.*)

Hammer! Hammer! Hammer!
Little ones will do.

God's Father was a working-man
And I am too!

(*The child goes to the door, peers out and returns with a pair of silvery slippers. And if they flashed and shone as with the wings of golden butterflies it is not I that would be surprised.*)

God's Father was a working-man,
And I am too!
Come here to me, my little child,
Little ones will do!

(*The child goes to the Shoemaker who takes him on his knee and puts the shoes on his feet. Or, the child may sit on a stool while the Shoemaker kneels before him as he puts on the shoes. Outside is heard the song of boys and girls on their way to the Christmas tree.*)

SINGERS:

(*Outside.*)

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,

The Little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where
He lay—
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

SHOEMAKER:

There—now you have the shoes—You'll leave me, boy!

CHILD:

And if I go, I'll come again—I will.

(*He kisses the Shoemaker and goes to the door. He opens it and reveals blue night lit by a star. He turns back for a moment, his hands lifted as in blessing.*)

CHILD:

Blessed be thy leather.

(*The child runs out into the night. The Shoemaker looks after him like one bereaved. Then, as he returns to his work, a light falls upon the*

bench and he beholds the row of stout shoes and gay slippers.)

SHOEMAKER:

The Christ Child!

(*He stands looking down at the shoes, his hands outspread above them. The company of boys and girls on their way to the Christmas tree pass by the window and door singing. They carry lanterns or tapers. At the end, they repeat these lines:*

"Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray."

It is not necessary to introduce the Singers into "A Christmas Miracle." It may be done by two people, the Child and the Shoemaker. We suggest "The Cradle Hymn" by Martin Luther for the hymn at the close. The children's song in the beginning, "The Little Lord Jesus," is the opening stanza from "A Christmas Folk Song" by Lizette Woodworth Reese.

CRADLE HYMN

WAY in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay—
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray;
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for Heaven, to live with Thee there.

MARTIN LUTHER.

GOD BLESS THIS HOUSE

A ceremony of the Christmas candle

This ceremony is for a company of CHRISTMAS CAROLLERS, *one of whom is the* CANDLE BEARER. *The chorus may be either spoken or sung. The candle lighted on Christmas Eve is set by the window or door to welcome the* CHRIST CHILD *in.*

TWO INSCRIPTIONS FOR THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

I

Come, Heavenly Child, and on this place
Shed the sweet halo of Thy grace.
O burning Love, O Heavenly Fire
Consume me with Thy deep desire.

172570

II

As in the Holy Christ Child's Name
This blessed wax shall feed the flame—
So let my heart its fires begin
And light the Heavenly Pilgrim in.

THREE HYMNS TO SING BEFORE THE CEREMONY

I. God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen.

II. The First Nowell.

III. We Three Kings from Orient Are.

GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLEMEN

OD rest ye, merry gentlemen; let nothing you dismay
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas Day.
The dawn was red on Bethlehem, the stars shone through the gray.
When Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas Day.

God rest ye, little children; let nothing you affright,
For Jesus Christ, your Saviour, was born this happy night.
Along the hills at Galilee the white flocks sleeping lay
When Christ, the child of Nazareth, was born on Christmas Day.

God rest ye, all good Christians, upon this happy morn,
The Lord of all good Christians was of a woman born.
Now all your sorrows He doth heal, your sins He takes away;
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas Day.

THE FIRST NOWELL

HE first Nowell the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields
as they lay—
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

CHORUS:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

They looked above, and there saw a star,
As it shone in the east but beyond them afar;
And to the earth it give forth great light,
And continued so both day and night.

CHORUS:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

And by the light of that same bright star
There were three wise men came from the east
country far;
To seek the King it was their intent.
And to follow the star wherever it went.

CHORUS:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

The star drew nigh unto the north-west,
Over Bethlehem paused and there it did rest,
And there did shine most bright and did stay
Over where the young child and His mother lay.

CHORUS:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

Then entered in those wise men all three,
Very reverent upon bended knee,

And offered there in his presence gifts
Of gold and of myrrh and of frankincense.

CHORUS:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises unto our Heavenly Lord
That made the heavens and earth of naught
And with His blood mankind hath bought.

CHORUS:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

WE THREE KINGS

E three Kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain,
Moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

CHORUS:

O Star of wonder, Star of night,
Star with Royal Beauty bright
Westward leading,
Still proceeding,
Guide us to Thy perfect Light.

GASPARD:

Born a King on Bethlehem plain
Gold I bring to crown Him a God.

King forever
Ceasing never
Over us all to reign.

CHORUS:

O Star of wonder, Star of night,
Star with Royal Beauty bright
Westward leading,
Still proceeding,
Guide us to Thy perfect Light.

MELCHIOR:

Frankincense to offer have I,
Incense owns a deity nigh;
Prayer and praising
All men raising,
Worship Him God on high.

CHORUS:

O Star of wonder, Star of night,
Star with Royal Beauty bright

Westward leading,
Still proceeding,
Guide us to Thy perfect Light.

BALTHAZAR:

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing,
Bleeding, dying,
Sealed in a stone cold tomb.

CHORUS:

O Star of wonder, Star of night,
Star with Royal Beauty bright
Westward leading,
Still proceeding,
Guide us to Thy perfect Light.

Glorious now behold Him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice;
Heaven sings Allelujah: Allelujah,
The earth replies.

GOD BLESS THIS HOUSE

CANDLE BEARER:

E gentle friends, that gather here,
I have a tidings strange and dear,
A message and a speech of cheer.

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

FIRST WAIT:

The child that stands outside the door
Shall bless this house from roof to floor.
So bid Him in to leave no more.

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

SECOND WAIT:

Every stone and every sod

On which our feet this night have trod,
Has found a voice to cry—"Praise God."

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

THIRD WAIT:

This room is filled with shining things,
With aureoles and splendid wings,
And every rafter in it sings.

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

CANDLE BEARER:

And so upon this Holy Night,
On which a star has shone so bright,
I pray you, let us light our light.

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

(FIRST WAIT *lights candle.*)

CANDLE BEARER:

Thou blessed wax, lift high thy flame!
And all our hearts shall do the same.
Burn, holy torch, in Jesus' name!

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

FOURTH WAIT:

Who sets a light upon this tide
Shall bid the Heavenly Child inside.
Safe shall we live and safely bide!

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

FIFTH WAIT:

A blessing falls on us below!
And now, sweet friends, I bid you go,
And let Him in out of the snow.

(*All turn to go.*)

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

(*Procession moves to door, the* CANDLE BEARER *holding high the candle.*)

CANDLE BEARER:

Lo, now a step outside the gate!
Not on this threshold let Him wait,
So sweet in all His innocent state.

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

FIRST WAIT:

For when the vision takes our soul
We'll laugh to see His shining stole,
His soft and tender aureole.

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

SECOND WAIT:

But if our eyes have grown so blind,
We cannot see the Heavenly kind,
Still shall His healing ease our mind.

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

THIRD WAIT:

Although that sight our vision miss
His Presence shall be known by this—
Upon our souls His beauteous kiss!

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

CANDLE BEARER:

Though we be blind, yet He is sure.
And now we may not tarry more.
I pray, good friends, unbar the door.

(WAIT *opens door,* CANDLE BEARER *lifts candle into darkness while all sing.*)

Veni, Veni Domine.

CANDLE BEARER:

Now bless this House, Thou Unseen Guest,
Whose favor on us all shall rest—
An open door Thy only quest!

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

(*All go out except the* CANDLE BEARER *who remains with his lighted candle at the open door.*)

CANDLE BEARER:

Come, Lovely Love, and dwell inside,
May peace in every heart abide.
Peace to the whole earth, far and wide.
Laudes Tibi Domine.

(*He leaves the lighted candle at the threshold and goes out, while the chorus, outside, sings unseen.*)

CHORUS:

Laudes Tibi Domine.

After the Candle Ceremony is over, if it is desired, the audience might repeat, in prayer, one of the inscriptions for the Christmas Candle.

THE OXEN

HRISTMAS Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek, mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If some one said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"

I should go with him in the gloom
Hoping it might be so.

THOMAS HARDY.

We must not forget the animals on Christmas Eve. Animals have ceremonies as well as people.

THE END

VALTERS & SONS, INC.
BOUND
JAN 18 1938
CHICAGO, ILL.